

BULEVARD 70p

AOR/Melodic Rock Fanzine.No3.

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EDITORIAL

Dear Reader,

Alright, so I was wrong about the issue being out in September. As usual I have a good excuse prepared but I shan't bore you with the details. Suffice to say that in future we will do our best to be on time. On this subject I have some good news. In future, BOULEVARD will be available every 2 months, so if an interview is going to be late we can save it for the following issue and it will still be pretty much up to date. I hope the news pleases you.

The bad news though (I bet you were expecting this one eh?), is that, due to certain increases in the price of materials/postage, BOULEVARD will have to increase its price by 5p per copy. This will, of course, affect our subscription rates, although I'm sure that the 'zine is still a decent read at 75p an issue.

Anyway, enough of this talk of monetary matters and onto happier subjects. As usual BOULEVARD still offers the record finding service for anyone looking for an album which got away. Just drop us a line with your wants and we'll try our best to help out.

Also, if you would like to make any comments or suggestions (preferably only the type that are physically possible!) then feel free to drop us a line at the address below, although please include an S.A.E. if you would like a reply.

We hope you enjoy issue 3. of BOULEVARD. If you do (or don't), then drop us a line at:

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Alternatively, you could give me (that's MARK ASHTON) a ring on 0942-31748 (day)
or 0942-862335 (night)

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The help and contributions of certain people has helped us grow from strength to strength. We thank you all greatly.

CHRIS 'it's DAIR, not DURR' LLOYD, MAG SODERKVIST, PHILLIPE PIERQUIN, ANTONIO FERRO for all their writing/discoveries/time.

DEREK OLIVER, CHIP RUGGIERI, KRISTIN GULBRANDSEN, DAVE ROBERTS, JOSIE WHEELDON, PETER TUOZZOLO, KELV HELLRAZER and anyone else who has helped us that we may have inadvertently missed out.

Once again, a special thanks to the guys at VIBES RECORDS, BURY, JOHN, GORDON, PAUL and TONY. Much appreciated by the WIGAN WIMPS!

BONFIRE-Remember Nov.5th

By now everyone should be familiar with the name BONFIRE. With 2 very good albums under their belts and the prospect of a new MICHAEL WAGENER produced opus in early '89 we thought it was about time to investigate the band a little further, so with the help of a good friend of ours, PHILIPPE PIERQUIN, writer of French language fanzine HEAVYNIL, based in BELGIUM, here is an interview conducted with BONFIRE'S lead singer CLAUS LESSMAN.

BOULEVARD: WHY DID DOMINIC HUELSHORST (the original drummer) LEAVE THE BAND ?

CLAUS: Personal reasons. Musically we got along very well because he's a good drummer but the private situation was worse than we expected. The problem is, if you are together for a long time on tour or in the studio you can see that one member does not fit into the band. So we decided that it's better for us that DOMINIC left the band. There was no problems between us, we parted amicably.

BOULEVARD: WHY DID YOU CHOOSE KEN MARY TO DRUM ON THE ALBUM ?

CLAUS: That was MICHAEL WAGENER's suggestion. At the time DOMINIC was still in the band and nobody thought that he wouldn't be playing on the album. The problem was that he hadn't played with the band during pre-production or whilst HANS, HORST and myself were in the U.S. MICHAEL thought that it would be better to use a session player for the recordings and suggested KEN MARY. DOMINIC was asked if he would mind and he said that if it was for the good of the band then it was alright with him.

BOULEVARD: WHERE DID YOU MEET EDGAR PATRICK (the new drummer) AND WHY DID YOU CHOOSE HIM ?

CLAUS: We chose him because he stood out from the other 30 we tried. Also, he was a suggestion of MICHAEL'S.

BOULEVARD: HOW MUCH CAN A PRODUCER DEFINE THE SOUND OF A BAND AND SPECIFICALLY HOW MUCH INFLUENCE DID MICHAEL WAGENER HAVE ON YOU ?

CLAUS: For us it was a lot but it was a good influence that he had on us. We didn't feel like we were being pressured into anything. It's important that we work with someone who acts like an extra band member. We couldn't work with a dictator!

BOULEVARD: HOW DID YOU GET SUCH BIG NAMES TO WRITE WITH YOU ?

CLAUS: That was our managements idea. They thought it would be good for us to see how U.S. writers worked. It was great experience for us to write with such people as JOE LYNN TURNER, JACK PONTI, MARC RIBBLER and BOB HALLIGAN Jr. It was very interesting and we learned a lot.

BOULEVARD: DO YOU THINK YOUR MUSIC HAS CHANGED A LOT ?

CLAUS: No, I think it's just developed. The early material sounded a little like the modern songs but we were younger then. We've matured a lot since then.

BOULEVARD: ARE THERE ANY PEOPLE YOU WOULD ESPECIALLY LIKE TO WORK WITH ?

CLAUS: I'd like to do something like the BAND AID project. That would be interesting. Also I'd like to sing with KLAUS MEINE (of the SCORPIONS).

BOULEVARD: DO YOU THINK YOU'D EVER PUT A STRONG LYRICAL MESSAGE IN A SONG ?

CLAUS: Maybe we'll do that. I think musicians have a lot more to say than just "The tour's going well, the album's really good". It would be great if we could start a movement in GERMANY like the ROCK AGAINST DRUGS one in the U.S. Maybe the MINISTRY OF STATE could help. Yes... that would be most interesting.

BOULEVARD: DO YOU HAVE ANY LAST MESSAGE FOR OUR READERS ?

CLAUS: Stay away from DRUGS!!

DAVINCI-Young Desperados



Those of you who obtained BOULEVARD No.2 will have noticed that I went a little over the top on NORWEGIAN hopefuls DAVINCI, whose debut self-titled album had had me reaching for the dictionary in an attempt to spell all the superlatives that I was using, correctly. Well, imagine my joy when I was offered the chance of an interview with lead singer LARS AASS! The arrangements were duly made and my questions all neatly written out in preparation. Now all I had to do was wait for the phone to ring, which it duly did at exactly the designated time.

For those of you unfamiliar with the material of DAVINCI (which will probably be a lot of you as the album hasn't yet reached these shores in any form) let me assure you that they are one of the best new groups to emerge on the AOR scene in the last year or so, combining the commerciality of EUROPE with street-cred swagger in the VAN HALEN vein. So please bear with me and the story will unfold.

The first question I put to LARS' was perhaps the most obvious one regarding the bands background.

"DAVINCI was formed about 2 years ago after the other members of the band, GUNNAR WESTLIE (guitar), DAG SELBOSKAR (keyboards), BJORN BOGE (bass) and JARLE MALOY (drums), had been around in other outfits. We recorded a demo which featured 'FOREVER IN MY HEART' and sent it off to various companies. POLYGRAM liked it and asked us to record 'FOREVER..' as a single. It sold well so they gave us an album deal."

Ah yes, I was going to ask you about the message on the reverse of the album about 31 crazy nights.

"Well, when the time came to record the album there were no studios free during the daytime so we recorded it at night between 11p.m. and 9a.m. Believe me, it's a strange feeling trying to concentrate at 4a.m."

Why did you produce it yourselves?

"Money! If we had used an outside producer it would have greatly reduced our studio time."

Will you use outside help on the next album (due next APRIL)?

"Well once again it's down to money. If we use an outside producer we want a top name so rather than use someone we're not happy with we'll do it ourselves. Besides, if we do it ourselves we can get the sound just how we like it and give GUNNAR more freedom to solo."

Who does GUNNAR listen to as a guitarist?

"Mostly ALLAN HOLDSWORTH and EDDIE VAN HALEN"

And the rest of the group's influences?

"JOURNEY and VAN HALEN."

That explains the style of the L.P. then. Each side opens up with a couple of AOR hit single type tracks and ends with loose, almost jazzy rockers.

"Yes, we wanted it that way. We put the singles at the start and allowed ourselves more of a free reign on the other tracks."

CONT'D

How's the L.P. doing in NORWAY(the only country of release so far) ?

"We've sold about 20,000 copies so far."

Well that's not bad.Surely the L.P. should be released in other countries then.Has it been sent to POLYGRAM UK yet.Have they heard it?

"I guess so.I don't know for sure."

Right,let's change the subject as I don't want to comment too much on a label which has managed to lose TREAT and STAGE DOLLS already.What's it like for a band touring in NORWAY.Are there many places to play?

"Well, we've played over 150 gigs in the past year or so.I guess it's not too bad."

How do you feel about being the youngest member of the band?

"It's great!The other guys are more experienced so they really push me a lot in the studio."

Finally then LARS,I've been dying to ask you about the track "SHE'S A HE" from the L.P.What's the story behind it?

"I was sick of writing normal love songs and I had just seen a movie, you know the type of movie,and the idea struck me when I began writing.I don't think we should go into it any further than that."

I quite agree,don't want to corrupt the readers now do we ?

So there you have it(or not,if POLYGRAM UK have anything to do with it) Ifound LARS to be an extremely funny,intelligent and most importantly,well adjusted young man who couldn't do enough to help me with any questions I cared to ask.Makes a change from the usual big-headed over-hyped idiots that pass for 'stars' in this country,doesn't it?

The 2nd DAVINCI L.P.should find it's way to these shores and then everyone will have the opportunity to sample the melodic delights of this fine act.Order my copy now!

MJA

ALIEN-have landed

Gossip and rumours have been floating around over the past few weeks that lead vocalist JIM JIDHEAD had left Pomp Gods ALIEN,the latest and so far the greatest,of SWEDEN's assault on AOR dominance.Naturally the rumour caused serious discomfort to the guys here at BOULEVARD so we thought we'd better get first hand comment and contacted the band's bass player KEN SANDIN immediately.The first question,obviously,was about the rumours.

"Yep,I know this will shock you but JIM has left the group,He made the decision to leave something like 3 or 4 weeks ago."KEN starts.

Why did he decide to leave ?

"Well,you see,JIM has a wife and a little kid and he wanted to spend more time with them.He just couldn't stand the pace of the fast life that ALIEN are living at the moment.The pressure would have been even greater by the time we make our assault on the U.S. market!"

So the L.P. is finally out over there ?

"The L.P. has been remixed by DUANE BARON(a man respected in AOR circles) and it will follow the release of a single in November(probably "TEARS DON'T PUT OUT THE FIRE").We are hard at work on the video at the moment."

Wait a minute.This must mean you've already got a replacement for JIM ?

"Yeah.We were very lucky as we happen to know this guy,PETTER SANDBERG, who sang in MADISON and everyone in the group knew he had a great voice so we decided to jump straight in and ask him.TONY BORG,our guitar player,rang him up and PETTER was at his place 30 minutes later amazed at the offer."

So PETTER will do JIM's vocals on the video ?

"That's right.In December you will have the first chance to hear PETTER's vocals as we will be releasing a new single for the European market around that time."

You mean you've already started on new material ?

"We've already got something like 5 or 6 completed songs and ideas for about 10 more...But the single in December will be an old song called "NOW..."

CONT'D

...LOVE"(incidentally a song which should have been on the debut L.P. in my opinion)or maybe a cover of an old 60's song.I can't really tell you any more about that for the moment though."

The album is still unavailable in ENGLAND.Will it be released here soon ?

"From what I heard ENGLAND will also have the new packing(cover and remix) That's what our new manager hopes for anyway."

Who is your new manager then ?

"It's a guy called STEVE BARNETT who also handles the affairs of AC/DC and GARY MOORE."

Well that sounds like a good move,so I guess that's all for now.Take care and keep in touch.

"Definitely,I will keep you up to date with the progress of ALIEN."

So there you are,a simple explanation to an age old problem.If you have never heard PETTER SANDBERG before and are maybe worrying that he will not be able to recreate JIM JIDHEAD's amazing voice,don't worry,their styles are very similar(at times you would have difficulty in saying which of them it is that you are listening to).As a matter of fact JIM JIDHEAD was once the singer in another SWEDISH outfit called VON ROSEN before he left to join ALIEN.Guess who his replacement was in that band.Yes,PETTER SANDBERG!

I would definitely recommend waiting until the remixed version of the ALIEN L.P. is available.The SCANDINAVIAN edition that is currently available on Import has one of the worst mixes that I've ever heard(and one of the worst covers as well!).But when the album eventually gets it's US release it's definitely a case of 'BUY OR F.O.A.D.'

MJA

DE-ARROW-Shooting Stars



DE-ARROW is easily AUSTRALIA's no.1 AO-R act.With truly amazing material that compares with any of the best groups around today, That may seem like a pretty strong claim but the band, consisting of NOEL HART(keys),DRAGON STANIC(guitars)and PAUL GLEESON(bass), have put together one of the best demos I've heard al-1 year.Unfortunate-ly the band have no lead vocalist at the moment,those duties being taken by ADRIAN CAMPBELL (ex AVALANCHE)a

very good session singer.

After 2 years of searching they are still without a singer,but there is one guy who has stood out at auditions.

The group has created a lot of interest lately,both in AUSTRALIA and in our half of the world.In July/August they were voted in the top10 unsigned bands in their country in the YAMAHA INTERNATIONAL ROCK CONTEST.Several big management companies have shown interest and an as yet unspecified major record label has been in contact with the group to see what all the fuss is about.

There has even been talk of the band releasing 2 of the 3 tracks on their new demo as a single and at this very moment contracts are being looked

DE-ARROW (CONT'D)

over. I reckon if they get a self financed single out then a deal with a big label will follow as all 3 tracks on the demo, "ROCK'N'ROLL NIGHTS", "WE GOT THE WINGS" and "FIRST BREAK OF THE HEART" are brilliant, full of tasteful guitarwork, thoughtful keyboards and yes, soaring vocals. A true AOR wet dream!

Surely the ultimate accolade so far for the band is the news that they are to be included on the forthcoming International AOR compilation album being put together by none other than the Worlds AOR guru DEREK OLIVER!

Need we say any more? Get on the case and contact:

DE-ARROW, 23 JONES CRESCENT, ROSSANA 3084, VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA.

MJA

TIN DRUM-running on diesel

TIN DRUM is the new act formed by ex TNT drummer DIESEL DAHL (hence the awful joke), after problems over musical direction with the other members. The rest of the line-up is TROND OIEN (guitars/backing vox), SID RINGSBY (bass/backing vox) and TOVE (lead vocals) who used to front a band called MISSLEAD.

Anyway, with a lot of help from STAGE DOLLS' TORSTEIN FLAKNE and former TNT singer DAG INGEBRIGSTEN in the songwriting department (this team has also contributed several tracks to the forthcoming debut L.P. by SWEDISH/NORWEGIAN act SHA-BOOM, one to look out for I assure you), TIN DRUM have come up with an excellent debut which sounds similar to STAGE DOLLS/BONJOVI/TNT with a female singer (in the WITNESS/SAHARA sense of the word).

"HELLO, THE WORLD IS CALLING", a dead ringer for BONJOVI, "MIDNITE DYNAMITE", which has a searing solo and "STRANGER IN PARADISE", the ultimate 3 minute song, are the pick of a fine bunch although special mention must also be made of a spirited cover version of BAD COMPANY's "CAN'T GET ENOUGH".

The first single from the L.P., "DRUMS OF WAR" (which is the title track) has been in the NORWEGIAN charts for over 10 weeks and the L.P. has already shifted over 20,000 copies in the short space of time since its release in late September.

On tour the group have been drawing huge crowds on their "MIDNITE DYNAMITE" tour, which they have made to support the single.

Drummers will also be pleased to hear that DIESEL performs extremely well throughout, in fact I had no idea he was so good when he was in TNT.

Definitely a band to check out but if you have any problems locating the album then try the management at the following address:

LIGHTBRINGER TALENT GROUP, STARBEAT PRODUCTIONS, BOX 4352, 0402 OSLO 4, NORWAY.

MJA



WHITE SISTER-3rd Time Lucky

WHITE SISTER first came to notice in '84, releasing a cracking L.P., which, from the opening notes of "DON'T SAY THAT YOU'RE MINE" reeks of class. 4 guys originating from LOS ANGELES had come up with one of the greatest L.P.'s of it's kind since ANGEL last graced us on record.

Funnily enough, it was ex-ANGEL maestro GREG GUIFFRIA who produced the debut for the band. The PUNKY MEADOWS (ANGEL's guitarist) song "WHIPS" also brings back happy memories of ANGEL. Perhaps that's because GUIFFRIA plays keyboards on the track?

The album is full of Melodic Rock classics like "STRAIGHT FROM THE HEART", "CAN'T SAY NO" and "PROMISES", rarely will these tracks be bettered:

After 2 years and a lot of legal hassles, the second WHITE SISTER album, "FASHION BY PASSION" was released. This time the band opted for a more commercial sound and having parted company with GARRI BRANDON, who joined JOHN PARR for a while, they brought in a session guy to lay down the keyboard parts.

Arguably the 2nd album didn't quite live up to the expectations after the debut but it was still one of the best releases of '86. (Tell that to JOURNEY, BOSTON, QUEENSRÿCHE, EUROPE, KING KOBRA, TRIUMPH etc, MJA)

It still contained those typical Rockers such as the classic "PLACE IN THE HEART" and gems like "DANCIN' ON MIDNIGHT", "APRIL" and the immense "SAVE ME TONIGHT", which also appeared on the soundtrack to the spoof horror movie "FRIGHT NIGHT".

Once more the album contains songs from the pen of PUNKY MEADOWS, this time along with ex-TRILLION/TOTO singer FERGIE FREDERIKSON.

WHITE SISTER then toured the UK as support to BRITISH AORsters FM, which marked the debut of new keys man DAVID VINCENT. By all accounts these dates were a total success, which makes me wonder why other bands of a similar situation to WHITE SISTER don't try to hook up together and do a co-headlining tour.

At present WHITE SISTER are working on their 3rd L.P. which should see the band taking the world by storm. They've recently demoed 5 new songs, only in rough form I must admit, but they are to say the least brilliant.

There's "RESTLESS HEART" with its typical WHITE SISTER feel and an exceptional chorus, more like the 2nd L.P. than the 1st though. "EVERYBODY WANTS WHAT SHE'S GOT" is another killer, but it's the 3rd song that completely blew me away entitled "FIRST TIMES FOREVER". Take it from me, this song is one of the greatest songs this decade, with such a memorable chorus that you'll be singing it for ages. I can't wait to hear a full production job on this track, a true piece of genius!

How can they follow this I thought, well they have a good try with "TELL ME WHY" a similar sort of track to "DANCIN' ON MIDNIGHT" and "ONE WAY LOVE" which is their biggest (and best?) attempt so far at a distinctive AOR sound. This is a real cracker.

There is some speculation as to the line-up at present as DAVID VINCENT is no longer with the band so I can't fill you in with details just yet. But, no matter who appears on the album it's guaranteed to be brilliant, but please guys, no more BEATLES covers this time eh?

CL

CHARIZMA-Brothers In AORms

CHARIZMA formed way back in '81 and featured the line-up which has remained ever since, namely the 3 brothers NIKOLAUSSEN, BOSSE (bass/vocals), JANNE (drums) and GORAN (guitar). For the early part of their existence they played only low key gigs and spent most of the time rehearsing. In the Spring of '85 though the guys decided to take things into their own hands when none of the major record labels would sign them and they financed their own L.P.

The album was recorded in 11 days with producer HANS ENGSTROM, who also handles keyboards on the L.P. Distributed through EMI, "ROCK THE WORLD" was released in September '85. The L.P. got a fairly good response in their homeland of SWEDEN and even got CHARIZMA voted 'Act of the Month' in one of the countries biggest Rock magazines.

In April '86 the band recorded a new single, "TURN ME ON", in an attempt to

CONT'D

get the majors interested again. But luck wasn't with them and they failed to obtain any major recognition even though "TURN ME ON" is one of the undiscovered classics of our time.

In August '87 the band made trips to POLAND and the US and then, this year, after finishing another excellent demo in May, they made a hugely successful appearance at the GREENBELT FESTIVAL in ENGLAND and then went back to the US to play shows at GAZARRIS and THE COUNTRY CLUB.

At last, a deal is close to being signed in the STATES and the guys are even thinking of moving the whole project over the ATLANTIC. We here at BOULEVARD can only wish the band all the success in the world 'cos they've certainly had to work hard to get any form of recognition and also 'cos they're a bloody good band!

MJA



TORA - Failsworth's Finest

TORA are 6 young chaps from FAILSWORTH, just outside MANCHESTER, who play fine AOR/POMP along the lines of SURVIVOR, JOURNEY and SAGA.

After seeing them 3 times in the last month or so, I firmly believe them to be one of the best (if not the best) AOR acts in the country at the moment. Surprisingly though they are still without a deal, a sad but true fact and one which suggests to me that A+R men at record companies don't care who gets a contract as long as they don't have to travel very far and they receive their paycheques on time!

The music that TORA play is ridiculously intelligent, the arrangements in particular belie the members' tender years as they very rarely settle for the verse-chorus-verse-chorus-solo-chorus formula preferring instead to forgo long egotistical solos. It's not that the guitarists couldn't rip out a nasty piece of axework, they just feel that everyone does the same thing and they want to be different.

They do though have a brand new demo available of high class POMP. "BE SO STRONG", "NOTHING NEW (SIZE OF MY EGO)" and "INSECURITY", all of them full to the brim with soaring synths, intricate guitar patterns, strong harmonies and the wonderful vocal phrasing of PETER MCGUCKIAN. Let's not forget the solid rhythm section of drummer PAUL LUCAS and bassist NIGEL BLYTHE who never put a foot wrong throughout the tape and power the group along in the live arena.

If there was any doubt as to the depth of TORA's material, since the demo was recorded, 2 new songs have been introduced to the live set which are possibly their best yet compositions. These are "LEFT HAND CLAPPING" (on which the SAGA-like arrangement is brilliant) and "DON'T CALL ME OR THE CAPTAIN" (one of the more 'poppy' songs in the set, yet featuring a blistering HALEN-esque solo).

I wanted to get to the bottom of the TORA story so I gave guitarist PAUL WHEELDON a bell. What follows is a summary of the main points (thank you ALISTAIR BURNETT, MJA).

How long has the present line-up been together?

"About 10 or 12 months. We placed an ad in the local paper and both PETER

CONT'D

TORA (CONT'D)

(the singer) and PAUL (the drummer) joined us from another MANCHESTER band called OFFICER AND A GENTLEMAN."

After all this time together (about 8 years) do you still have the same hunger and passion for success?

"Oh yes, more than ever. All the band are really pushing for the top. We're really going for it now."

Who actually writes the songs?

"Well, there are 4 main songwriters in TORA, but the other 2 guys do chip in with help on the arrangements and stuff."

What about the new demo? I hear it's doing well in BELGIUM.

"Over in BELGIUM it's not illegal to play demos on the radio and they have stations where you can phone in and vote for your favourite songs. We reached No. 1 on RADIO AKTIES and No. 3 on RADIO OUTREMEUSE."

Do you see the CONTINENT as the future for TORA?

"Not really. We still see BRITAIN and the STATES as the main concerns, it's just that we seem to be doing well in EUROPE at the moment."

Are there any plans to record the 2 new songs at present?

"Not at the moment, due to lack of funds after paying for the last demo. As soon as we get some money together though we'll get them on tape."

Right then PAUL, last question. Do you see yourself playing in TORA in 5 years time?

"Definitely! At the moment the band feels strong. We all get along together and enjoy playing as a band, so yes we'll stay together."

GOOD.

TORA are an extremely talented band who, if given a break, could (sorry, make that will) go all the way. So come on all you record execs in LONDON. Make an effort to come and see TORA, or just listen to the demo and you simply won't be able to deny the band's potential.

CONTACT: JOSIE WHEELDON, 3 BURGESS DRIVE, FAILSWORTH, MANCHESTER, M35 0EU.

IVJ

In the meantime, check out the band at the following gigs:

- 22 NOVEMBER - BAND ON THE WALL, MANCHESTER.
- 24 NOVEMBER - 'OUTSIDE ON THE STEPS', OLDHAM.
- 6 DECEMBER - OLIVERS, CHESTER.
- 7 DECEMBER - MILOS, LIVERPOOL.
- 8 DECEMBER - WHICHWOOD, ASHTON.
- 30 DECEMBER - MENLIASE SOCIAL CLUB, STOCKPORT.



ALBUM REVIEWS

CHINA SKY- CHINA SKY (PARC/CBS)

The first thing that struck me about this one was the cover, which is very reminiscent of the classic 'GAMMA 1' L.P. A quick look at the reverse of the sleeve confirms the obvious quality—all perms, designer stubble and bedsheets!

CHINA SKY are a 3 piece consisting of RON PERRY(vocals), RICHARD SMITH (bass) and BOBBY INGRAM(guitars) who play hard edged melodic rock but balance it out with great use of keyboards and superb harmonies. Most of the material is self-written but producer FRANK WILDHORN and SUE SHIFRIN (who has written songs for the likes of HEART, BONNIE TYLER and CHER) lend a hand on occasion.

'TURN ON THE NIGHT' kicks off side 1 and straightaway it becomes plain that you're listening to some serious AOR magic. RON PERRY goes straight through the roof sounding like a superb cocktail of STEVE PERRY(a relation?) and KEN TAMPLIN. Yes, he's that good!

'THE GLORY' follows and is a Christian rocker which could stand alongside anything on the excellent SHOUT debut. Supreme melodia with a strong message. BOBBY INGRAM comes into his own on the potential hit single which follows. 'SOME KIND OF MIRACLE' features some serious fretburning and harmonies which take the track into another dimension.

The best is saved for side 2 though. 'ONLY THE YOUNG' is simply wonderful. Harmonies hit you left, right and centre on the amazing chorus and give even the mighty JOURNEY a run for their money (well, almost). Honestly, every time I listen to this L.P. RON PERRY seems to be trying to sing even better and bugger me if he doesn't succeed!

As if this wasn't enough just cop an earful of the last track 'THE LAST ROMANTIC WARRIOR', an atmospheric 6 minutes plus epic along the lines of AXE's 'BATTLES'. A slow start builds up into a guitar flurry from the 'FREEBIRD' school of solo-ing, 3 minutes of Southern bliss that will leave you breathless.

Now, what about a RON PERRY solo album to keep me happy inbetween CHINA SKY releases?

IVJ

AFTER HOURS- TAKE OFF (FM/REVOLVER)

At last, a BRITISH band that can take the Yanks on and beat a good few, I might add! Some of you will be familiar with them, already as they had a track featured on the FM/REVOLVER sampler album although they were known as XS back then. If so, you'll know roughly what to expect.

Many name changes later, AFTER HOURS, featuring JOHN FRANCIS(vocals), TIM PAYNE(guitar), MARTIN WALLS(bass) and MARK ADDISON(drums), have come up with an album that is chock full of catchy songs, amazing vocals and good old BRITISH power.

Take the album's standout cut 'THE GAME' as an example. A brisk melodic rocker that shows what a truly great singer FRANCIS is. The version on the album though is not a patch on the demo version which has been doing the rounds for some time now, that one had a solo that would have put MALMSTEEN to shame!

Other tracks worth checking out are 'JUST ANOTHER LONELY NIGHT', which features great drumming and excellent phantom keyboards, 'TAKE OFF' and 'BETTER LATE THAN NEVER', the perfect sing-along-in-the-bath track.

Recently AFTER HOURS have recruited former MSG keyboardman ANDY NYE to help with live duties. Given the right push and a couple of lucky breaks they could go far. They deserve to, if only for the vocals of JOHN FRANCIS. It would be sad to see a great UK singer go to waste, God knows they're few and far between as it is!

IVJ

VIXEN- VIXEN (EMI MANHATTAN)

Right, after much hype (and no doubt ridicule) the VIXEN debut has finally reached these shores. So, what's all the fuss been about?

CONT'D

VIXEN (CONT'D)

Let's take a listen to the L.P. then.

Opener (and first single) 'EDGE OF A BROKEN HEART' is a corcker. A catchy singalong song which was penned by RICHARD MARX (who also produced the track) and FEE WAYBIL. Next up is 'I WANT YOU TO ROCK ME', a non too impressive attempt at moody rock. Better jump onto 'CRYIN', written by JEFF PARIS. Not too far from the original, perhaps a smattering of extra keys JANET GARDNER sings wonderfully throughout and JAN KUEHNEMUND plays a nice solo showing that she can keep up with the big boys (this last sentence is the sole property of IAN JOHNSON, I disown the pun completely, MJA). 'AMERICAN DREAM' (a JON BUTCHER track) has a funky feel with great slapped bass and jazzy drum lines from SHARE PEDERSON and ROXY PETRUCCI respectively. Side 1 closes with the immense 'DESPERATE', penned by the guitarist with LEAH SANTOS. It's a great POP/ROCK opus with a guest guitar solo from WHITESNAKE's VIVIAN CAMPBELL.

JEFF PARIS' 'ONE NIGHT ALONE' sets side 2 in motion. Keyboards abound on the VIXEN version and both guitars and vocals fence each other off to great effect. My own personal fave is 'LOVE MADE ME', a full blown rocker in the same mould as BONJOVI's 'BORN TO BE MY BABY' and proving that JANET GARDNER can really sing. 'CRUISIN' ends the L.P. off with it's crunchy riff and storming drums.

Oh yes, for CD buffs there's an extra track in the shape of another JEFF PARIS song 'CHARMED LIFE' which is, as you already know, an excellent cut

So, a very good debut and proof that the girls can do it as well as the guys. Can't wait for the next one and in the meantime, let's have some gigs!

IVJ

TRADIA- TRADE WINDS (FM/REVOLVER)

After the domination of the AOR scene by SWEDISH bands recently, it's good to be able to review an excellent US release for a change. Specialising in stunning hooks and clever arrangements, TRADIA are just that.

I'll get my only complaint out of the way firstly and that is that the production ideally could have been of a much higher standard. Some KEITH OLSEN style clarity would have helped the band immensely.

Apart from that though what we have on offer is of a very high standard. 'NEVER GONNA GO' comes at you first full of glorious harmonies that pound their way into your brain and stay there. Cutting guitarwork from MARK DURGETT takes the song into new realms of excellence and surely this track cannot be bettered. Think again, every song proves the depth of talent in the band. 'NO PAIN, NO GAIN', 'STAND YOUR GROUND' and 'DON'T PLAY YOUR ACE' are all superb chunks of AOR-dom, but it's 'TAKE THE CHANCE' which has all the ingredients just right for a killer pomp track. TOUCH-style vocals, solid rythms, fierce synths and a fantastic guitar solo which all goes to make one of the best pomp songs I've ever heard!

TRADIA have come up with one of those albums which is almost a classic, but like all good L.P.'s it will probably die an untimely death. I hope you all buy it just to prove me wrong!

IVJ

CHICAGO- 19 (REPRISE)

Most of you will have a pre-decided idea of what you think this L.P. will be like- slushy, over sentimental ballads and loads of annoying horns probably spring to mind when you hear the name CHICAGO. Well, you would be very much mistaken! CHICAGO 19 is a simply stunning collection of modern AOR gems with hardly a horn to be heard.

Take the first track "HEART IN PIECES" (written by TIM FEEHAN and BRIAN MACLEOD) as an example. Immediately noticeable is the polished quasi-perfect production courtesy of CHAS SANDFORD (RON NEVISON is also used on 4 of the cuts) which gives the song a feeling of space. Even though it's a driving rocker nothing is cluttered, each instrument can be heard clearly. Honestly, it's hard to believe this is CHICAGO, the guitars scream, the drums pound and the harmonies are just MASSIVE!

CONT'D

CHICAGO (CONT'D)

Follow this with the current US smashhit "I DON'T WANNA LIVE WITHOUT YOUR LOVE"and you begin to get some indication of the bands new direction."I DON'T. ..."isa sweeping ballad which features guitar genius DAN HUFF(as does most of the album)showing just why he is currently the session worlds 'Most Wanted Man'. By the way,take a listen to the intro vocals and tell me it doesn't sound like JOEY TEMPEST.Immense!

Other standout tracks are the rocking "COME IN FROM THE NIGHT",the semi-epic "VICTORIOUS"(penned by MARK JORDAN no less)and the BOLTON-esque ballads "YOU'RE NOT ALONE"and "LOOK AWAY"(written by DIANE WARREN,but then again isn't everything these days ?).

Throw away your previous bias about CHICAGO,now they're CETERA-less and playing excellent AOR in the mould of MICHAEL BOLTON and THE LADDER.Well worth a fiver of anyones money.

MJA

BRITTON- ROCK HARD (TSR/BACKSTAGE)

The title says it all really.BRITTON,a 5 piece act consisting of GARY HOLLAND(drums),SKIP FRANK(bass),JIM McMELLEN(guitar),PATRICK SCHINK(guitar/keys)and MICHAEL BRITTON(vocals)play hard edged melodic rock with just a smattering of keyboards and have come up with a decent,if not exactly essential album.

"LIVING ON THE RED LINE"intros with acoustic folk-tinged guitars and vox before bursting into a DOKKEN-ish rocker(Surprise,surprise eh?MJA).The axes are fast and furious,somewhat similar to AUTOGRAPH or KICK AXE at times.

"HOLD ON"on the other hand is a superb rocked-up ballad during which BRITTON's vocals sound almost European in their delivery whilst "OVER THE EDGE" sees the band veering into HURRICANE territory.

The title cut opens side 2,bludgeoning the listener into submission before fading into the brilliant "NAME THE TIME" on which the AUTOGRAPH influence is ressurected.BRITTON's voice is not exactly inspiring but is certainly good enough for this type of melodic rock.So,if the likes of AUTOGRAPH,HURRICANE and ,yes alright,DOKKEN(AAAaaghh!CL) are your cup of tea then BRITTON are for you.

IVJ

KANSAS- IN THE SPIRIT OF THINGS (MCA)

The first offering from the revamped KANSAS line-up "POWER"saw the band ranging from superb ballads("ALL I WANTED"and "CAN'T CRY ANYMORE")to full blown (melodic)rockers like "SILHOUETTES IN DISGUISE"and "WE'RE NOT ALONE ANYMORE"and was for some reason a much missed out on album.

Now 2 years later they're back again with the awesome "IN THE SPIRIT OF THINGS",a semi-concept album about a small KANSAS town,NEOSHO FALLS,which fell victim to a mighty flood during 1951.Production throughout is of the highest possible standard,no wonder though as it was supplied by BOB'if it's a concept album I'll do it'EZRIN.This one is a must for C.D. owners.

"GHOSTS" opens the proceedings,a truly haunting affair(sorry)giving STEVE WALSH the chance to prove that he's up there with the best of 'em.The keys swirl in and out of the speakers and STEVE MORSE even manages to conjur up images of DAVE GILMOUR on the sweeping solo.

PHIL EHART's drums fire in the next track "ONE BIG SKY",a storming rocker featuring a Southern choir to add an element of originality to proceedings.

"ONE MAN,ONE HEART"isa great stab at commerciality,written by guitarist supreme DAN HUFF(that man again)but to these ears it sounds a little too much like "TWO HEARTS,ONE BEAT"from BOBBY BARTH's solo L.P. of the same name.Still,it's a good song so I won't say anything if you won't.

"HOUSE ON FIRE" is perhaps the heaviest cut on the album,possibly even hinting at the greatness of STREETS.STEVE WALSH gives full reign to his vocal and keyboard talents but it's one of the world's finest guitarists STEVE MORSE who steals the thunder,at times he's almost a blur and then suddenly he shifts into beautiful melodic passages.Take note RONNIE LE TEKRO!

The second side features the albums most adventurous cut(añd perhaps best) "RAIN MAKER".It's the story of a con man who promises to end the drought for a price.His plan is to then sneak away into the night but the heavens actually

CONT'D

KANSAS (CONT'D)

opened and the flood which follows engulfs the town. Again the choir is drafted in to add atmosphere but it's WALSH and MORSE who excel during the solo in which they trade some of the hottest licks so far this year. Serious POMP!

It's great to see all the old-timers coming up with the goods this year, what with SURVIVOR, NIGHTRANGER and 38 SPECIAL also coming up with the goods it's becoming the year of the come-back. So go on, treat yourself, get in the spirit of things. Get KANSAS.

IVJ

TONE NORUM- THIS TIME (CBS)

Back in '86, TONE NORUM released her debut album which at the time didn't receive the acclaim it deserved. With most of the songs written by/instruments played by JOEY TEMPEST with a little help from IAN HAUGHLAND (on drums) and big brother JOHN (who provides most of the solos), TONE put together a fine array of songs. "STRANDED" and "THIS IS LOVE" for instance are perfect examples of how to write/play AOR.

With the release of "THIS TIME" two years later, TONE must surely get the recognition she deserves. Her vocals are more controlled and sharp than before as opener "POINT OF NO RETURN" shows. A gem of a track complete with a totally over the top solo from YNGWIE MALMSTEEN (twice as inventive as anything on the recent "ODYSSEY" outing, MJA). Next up is the brilliant ballad "DON'T TURN AWAY" which again features some superb guitarwork, this time courtesy of MICKE ANDERSSON (WHO ? © IAN JOHNSON) but it's the storming "IN A CRAZY WORLD LIKE THIS" which really ignites the album. Written by TOM KELLY and BILLY STEINBERG, two of the best songwriters in the world, and previously recorded by the likes of ERIC MARTIN and ALIEN (although their version didn't make the album), this is one song guaranteed to send even the strongest amongst you running for the nearest toilet!

Next up is the truly awesome ballad "MY SUMMER WITH YOU", a duet between TONE and TOMMY NILSSON (ex EASY ACTION and TOTO). What a voice this guy has. I nearly exploded the first time I heard this track (I can vouch for that, MJA). The basswork on this cut is simply the best that I've heard since PINO PALLADINO's contributions to the awesome "TAO" album by RICK SPRINGFIELD!

"IF YOU EVER FALL" though is the album's best track. A classic of EPIC proportions, penned by those demi-gods JACK PONTI and MARK MANGOLD, who have, between them written some of the greatest AOR songs of all time. "IF YOU..." is actually reminiscent at times of MANGOLD's old band TOUCH so that's an idea of the quality of this song.

JOHN NORUM then pops up on 2 tracks, most impressively on a cover of the old GRACE SLICK track "SOMEBODY TO LOVE" which at times sounds like SANTANA.

Produced to perfection by the likes of THOMAS WITT, PER BLOM and RICHARD T. BEAR, TONE has surrounded herself with first class songs, excellent musicians and has come up with a brilliant album.

"THIS TIME", maybe.

IVJ

NEW FRONTIER- 1ST (MIKA/POLYDOR)

Does anyone remember BILLY SATELITE? Well, they released one album back in '84 on CAPITOL records before vanishing into obscurity. The strange thing about BILLY SATELITE though was the fact that there was no-one in the band of that name. The album actually contained some excellent tracks like "SATISFY ME", "STANDIN' WITH THE KINGS" and the great ballad "I WANNA GO BACK" (which later appeared on EDDIE MONEY's highly recommended "CAN'T HOLD BACK" L.P.), all of which contained highly attractive hooks and cranked-up guitar. An album worth seeking out I can tell you.

Those of you who enjoyed BILLY SATELITE will be excited to hear that main man MONTY BYROM has re-surfaced with a new outfit called NEW FRONTIER, who have just released their debut album which was produced by AOR-whizz kid RICHIE ZIT-O.

10 great songs of superb West Coast AOR make up the album and will have you -u eagerly awaiting the follow up.

As well as BYROM on vocals and guitar there's GLEN LETSCH (bass), MARC NELSON (drums) and DAVID NEUHAUSER (synths) completing the line-up, but a whole host of guests appear on various tracks, most notably KIM BULLARD and RICHIE

CONT'D

NEW FRONTIER (CONT'D)

ZITO(keyboards)plus OREN,MAXINE and JULIA WATERS on backing vocals.Completing the guest list is TOMMY FUNDERBURK of WHAT IF(ZZZZZ,MJA),whose appeared on so many albums I bet even he's lost count.

From the opening strains of "UNDER FIRE",which contains an awesome keyboard hook to "AMERICAN DREAM"with it's REFUGEE feel,to "LONESOME BLUES",an old 50's rock'n' roll number the album is full of choice cuts.

Hold on though,"I THINK ABOUT YOU" sounds familiar.Hell,it should do! I do believe it's the same track which appeared on last years debut album from SWEDISH aces DALTON,and of course,it was written by MICHAEL BOLTON and MARTIN BRILEY,maybe not as hot as the DALTON version but still a certain hit if it is released Stateside.

Anyhow,if your tastes lie in the direction of EDDIE MONEY,MICHAEL BOLTON and maybe REFUGEE then check out NEW FRONTIER now.

CL

KUNI- LOOKING FOR ACTION (POLYDOR)

The debut album by JAPANESE guitar guru KUNI was basically a who's who of Melodic Metal artists and was really just a platform for young KUNI to display his fretboard gymnastics.Now though,he's returned with an album full of cracking Melodia in the style of LION,DOKKEN and VINNIE VINCENT(although KUNI is arguably better than any of these acts)

So,who's in the band I hear you ask?Well,there's vocalist supreme JEFF SCOTT SOTO(now with the brilliant US band EYES),one of the best singers in rock at the moment,DOUGLAS TAYLOR BAKER(bass)and MIKE TERRANA(drums)who gel together like they've been a band for years.

The main reason for the improvement in KUNI's material though has been in the songwriting department.At this point let me introduce SWEDISH guitar player CARY SHARAF.Originally CARY was in a SWEDISH band called WASA EXPRESS who later changed their name to SCANDINAVIA(a band which also featured MATTI ALFONZETTI,now with the amazing BAM BAM BOYS).Then he relocated to the STATES and played for the likes of BILLY SQUIER and JOE LYNN TURNER before forming his own band,UNDER FIRE with keyboard wizzard JIMMY WALDO(NEW ENGLAND and ALCATRAZZ).UNDER FIRE came within a whisker of releasing their debut L.P. before ARISTA pulled out and canned the whole thing.They should all be shot!

Anyway 2 of the songs set to appear on this album have now turned up on KUNI's L.P.,namely "STRANGERS IN THE NIGHT" and "MEMORIES OF YOU".Both are absolute storming cuts which delete the entire DOKKEN/WHITE LION catalogue. Honestly,if ARISTA couldn't see the potential of these tracks then it's time they left the music biz!

SHARAF's name comes up on 2 more tracks,these being the awesome "SOMEDAY" and "ALL NIGHT LONG",the former featuring one of the most original endings that I've heard all year.

CHUCK WRIGHT(HOUSE OF LORDS)also appears on the credits to "DON'T LOOK BACK" and "EYES OF A STRANGER"(like VINNIE VINCENT at his absolute best)which leaves 5 songs credited to KUNI/SOTO,best of which are "SAY GOODBYE"and the title track,and a short instrumental entitled "ACOUSTIC PIECE".

It's very difficult to find fault with this album as the songs are first class,the vocals powerful yet melodic and KUNI's guitarwork is furious although never goes on for too long.The only complaint that I can find is that the damn thing is so expensive.I can't honestly say that the album is worth £20 (which is what the C.D. version cost me)but as it will never come out over here there's not a lot one can do about it is there?It's a shame 'cos KUNI's got a raging album on his hands here.One to put on your Christmas wants list.

MJA

38 SPECIAL- ROCK'N'ROLL STRATEGY (A+M)

At last,a new 38 SPESH album to get my grubby mits on!It's been 2 years since they last graced vinyl with their mediocre "STRENGTH IN NUMBERS"L.P. In that time they've undergone some drastic personnel changes.Out went lead vocalist/guitarist/songwriter DON BARNES and one of the drummers STEVE BROOKIN-S and in came DANNY CHAUNCEY on guitar(most recently to be found on the WITNESS album,but don't mention that to MARK as it will only set him off again) and MAX CARL on vocals(whose "THE CIRCLE" solo album is essential)

So has the sound changed?Not really,but the infusion of the new boys has given the band the kick up the backside which they needed.

The title track gets things rolling with an almost ZZ TOP like solo,but

CONT'D

it's not until the 4th song, "COMIN' DOWN TONIGHT" that the band really shifts into top gear. MAX CARL sings up a storm and the spiralling guitars of JEFF CARLISI and DANNY CHAUNCEY push the cut along with relentless passion.

"MIDNIGHT MAGIC" follows and is exactly the sort of song which conjurs up images of convertible cars, sunny days (remember them?) and beautiful leggy blondes (steady on IAN, MJA). Excellent stuff!

"NEVER BE LONELY", "INNOCENT EYES" and "LOVE STRIKES", on side 2 positively storm along bolstered by the superb production of RODNEY MILLS. The guys can do no wrong.

So, if like me, you've been waiting for some Southern Comfort (Jeezuz, MJA) then this is exactly the tonic (!) for you.

IVJ

CRAAFT- 2ND HONEYMOON (RCA)

Well, it's been a long time coming but the 2nd album by GERMAN Melodic Merchants CRAAFT has been worth the wait. Record label changes (EPIC to RCA) and personnel shifts (out went guitarist REINHARD BESSER to be replaced by MARCUS SCHLEICHER) as well as filling the line-up with a permanent drummer (TOMMY SCHNEIDER) and bass player (TOMMY KEISER) have taken their time to occur but to my ears anyway, the fruits of their labours, "2ND HONEYMOON" is one of the best albums so far this year.

Current single "RUNAWAY" gives an indication of the band's style. Chunky riff-ing, layers of keyboards and beautiful melodies mingle with razor sharp solos. Whereas the first album suffered from out of place verses which detracted from the great choruses, the new L.P. sees everything fitting together perfectly.

Honestly, this album contains some of the best Melodic Rock Anthems I've heard since the mighty "FIREWORKS" opus from BONFIRE! These come in the shape of the aforementioned "RUNAWAY", "ILLUSIONS", "TWISTED UP ALL INSIDE", "CHANCE OF YOUR LIFE" (excellent keyboard intro guys) and the album's best cut "RUNNING ON LOVE" which opens in true "FINAL COUNTDOWN" style before kicking into a KISS-like riff and culminating in a simply stunning hookline. The lead work on this track defies description, suffice to say it's worth a thousand MALMSTEEN biddly solos.

Both the ballads, "DON'T YOU KNOW WHAT LOVE CAN BE?" (built on a simple keyboard hook and featuring awesome harmonies) and "JANE" (forget the SCORPIONS) are scarf waving anthems rather than fillers.

The drumming on the album was provided by special guests CURT CRESS (SAGA, RICK SPRINGFIELD) and TOMMY LEE (MOTLEY CRUE) who are 2 of the world's top players and the production, courtesy of PETER HAUKE (mixing was provided by MICHAEL WAGNER) is completely overblown and excellent.

I find it ridiculous that countries like GERMANY, SWEDEN and NORWAY are currently providing the only serious threat to the Yanks supremacy, whilst the UK at the moment absolutely sucks in the Melodic Rock department. But Hell, who cares where a band comes from when they're this good. If you're a fan of the BONFIRE, TREAT and BONJOVI style of Anthemic Rock then you'll do yourself a big favour by obtaining this album immediately.

MJA

SURVIVOR- TOO HOT TO SLEEP (SCOTTI BROS)

After the disappointing "WHEN SECONDS COUNT" album it's good to see the guys back on form with their new L.P. which comes over a little like the power of "CAUGHT IN THE GAME" with the melody of "VITAL SIGNS".

The band have gone through a few line-up changes since "SECONDS..", losing STEPHAN ELLIS (bass) and MARC DROUBAY (drums) their places are now filled by session musicians.

"SHE'S A STAR" kicks off side one with a riff not too dissimilar to MOTLEY CRUE's "GIRLS, GIRLS, GIRLS" (of all things) but it soon settles down into the good old SURVIVOR style of blasting keyboards and massive vocal hooks. "DESPERATE DREAMS" is the type of song which SURVIVOR take to the top of the US charts with alarming regularity yet fail to make an impact over here (unless the song is taken from a film about a brain dead asshole who won't go away, MJA), JIM PETERIK's keyboards harmonise with the guitars of FRANKIE SULLIVAN and JIMI JAMISON sings wonderfully. "TOO HOT TO SLEEP" follows and sees the guys emoting about love in the tropics, SULLIVAN's solo on this track is stunning, he really is one of the best guitarists in the world. "HERE COMES DESIRE" should have been

CONT'D

SURVIVOR (CONT'D)

on "CAUGHT IN THE GAME" with it's power and immense harmonies, courtesy of TOMMY SHAW and IAN LLOYD (where is he now) and "ACROSS THE MILES" is a brilliant ballad that is simply keyboard mayhem.

"TELL ME I'M THE ONE" is a rocky affair with storming guitars, proving that the guys don't need to rope in outside writers to come up with classy material. The album closes with the stunning "BURNING BRIDGES" a truly 'heavy' song with awesome vocals and a breathtaking solo.

SURVIVOR are back and ready to show the young pretenders how it's done.

IVJ

HOUSE OF LORDS- HOUSE OF LORDS (SIMMONS/RCA)

1 minute and 40 seconds is all we really hear of GREG GUIFFRIA on the mucho hyped debut from this band and it's the rest of the band that are the real stars, namely JAMES CHRISTIAN (ex L.A. ROCKS), LANNY CORDOLA (guitars), CHUCK WRIGHT (bass) and KEN MARY (drums, ex everybody).

The 1.40 minutes in question is at the start of opener "PLEASURE PALACE", an out and out rocker that sees LANNY CORDOLA making his claim to the title of Guitar Hero. "EDGE OF YOUR LIFE" starts off slow with JAMES CHRISTIAN's amazing voice washing over you before kicking in with KEN MARY and CHUCK WRIGHT forcing the track along. LANNY CORDOLA plays his fingers off and must be pushing his tremolo system to the absolute maximum.

Next track "LOOKING FOR STRANGE" opens with a fierce solo and excellent drumming and the STAN BUSH composition "LOVE DON'T LIE" is exactly the same as the original except for the solo.

"HEARTS OF THE WORLD" is what all melodic rock should sound like, layers of vocal harmonies, keyboards and guitars build up to a stormer of a chorus. Great stuff!

"JEALOUS HEART" opens thoughtfully with a magical acoustic piece from CORDOLA that slips into the best track on the album, a GUIFFRIA soundalike with great drums and bass, tight guitars and raging vocals.

To sum up then, it's not GREG GUIFFRIA whose the star of the L.P., but together with the rest of the band, he's put out an excellent Melodic Pomp album.

IVJ

DARE- OUT OF THE SILENCE (A+M)

You've all heard the saying 'Buy BRITISH, it's best', well this time they're right 'cos DARE have come up with an AOR gem, better by far than anything that the Yanks are currently producing and a definite contender for 'Album of the Year'.

As you will know by now, DARE were formed by former THIN LIZZY keyboard player DARREN DEAN WHARTON, who has spent the last few years piecing together easily the best UK AOR band, forget FM, SHY and the sub-JOURNEY amateurish warblings of STRANGEWAYS.

Opener, and first single, "ABANDON" is a moody Rocker with towering keyboards and glorious harmonies, WHARTON's voice is superb, I never thought he'd be this good. VINNY BURNS also provides a very thoughtful solo on this cut (I've always had my reservations about BRITISH guitarists before but not now).

Keyboards, keyboards and more keyboards usher in "INTO THE FIRE", which is an AOR classic with a hookline so big you could land MOBY DICK with it!

Next up is a ballad, "NOTHING IS STRONGER THAN LOVE", which I hold second only to BOSTON's "A MAN I'LL NEVER BE", with it's TOUCH style harmonies and immense chorus, a true masterpiece.

"RUNAWAY" on the other hand, is a more uptempo song which simply rages in a live situation (which we will vouch for), as it has a brilliant sing-a-long chorus and amazing guitarwork.

Next up is my personal fave though, "UNDER THE SUN". Set the keyboards to 'moody', open with haunting guitars and place over that a simply immense vocal hook. Perfection!

I suspect that DARREN will choose "KING OF SPADES" as his favourite cut though 'cos it's dedicated to the late, and extremely great, PHIL LYNOTT. It's a moving piece which should go down as an anthem for LIZZY fans everywhere. In fact, when the band played this live recently they incorporated a chunk out of "BLACK ROSE" in the solo which was totally fitting and brilliant.

"HEARTBREAKER" is the track which should get the most airplay in the Rock clubs as it's a BONJOVI style slab of Melodia, actually deleting anything on

CONT'D

the last 3 JOVI releases.

The last track, "DON'T LET GO", a song about a young drug victim has the albums best solo from VINNY BURNS and, once again, DARREN sings up a storm.

Having been lucky enough to catch the bands first LONDON gig recently I can vouch for their ability in the live situation as they reproduced the sound and passion of the album completely, even throwing in a brilliant cover version of "DON'T BELIEVE A WORD" to top things off. So go on, splash out on DARE (the C.D. sounds unbelievable) as it's a contender for 'Album of the Year' and, good grief, it's BRITISH!

IVJ

NIGHTRANGER- MAN IN MOTION (MCA)

This is without a doubt the best thing that the RANGERS have done since the classic "DAWN PATROL" L.P. A mighty claim maybe, but just one listen to the likes of the title track with it's street choir harmonies, "DON'T START THINKIN" with its almost JOURNEY-esque mid section, and "KISS ME WHERE IT HURTS", possibly the closest NIGHTRANGER will ever come to being sleazy, will convince you.

2 outside compositions appear on the L.P., namely "HERE SHE COMES AGAIN" written by MICHAEL BOLTON, MARTIN BRILEY and BOB HALLIGAN Jr., which is actually a bit dissapointing considering the writers and "I DID IT FOR LOVE", a RUSS BALLARD song which must be high in the list for possible singles. Honestly, why this guy isn't ranked up there with BOLTON, CHILD and HOLLY KNIGHT is totally beyond me as he writes some of the best AOR in the known Universe. Check out his own self titled album (EMI, 1984) for an introduction to his talents if you're unfamiliar with him.

I still haven't mentioned my fave track on the album yet. "HALFWAY TO THE SUN" opens with monumental drums and unbelievable guitar histrionics before bursting into a chorus which features some over the top, pompous (note, not POMP) backing vocals. The solo will leave every pair of underwear in the house soiled as it opens with the usual biddly biddly work from JEFF WATSON and silly noise parts from BRAD GILLIS before appearing to fade away only to come back in with a marching lead pattern which continues to the end of the track.

Don't wait for "MAN IN MOTION" to be released over here, buy it now so it can be in your top 10 albums of the year when you vote in the great BOULEVARD review of '88 coming soon.

MJA

DAVID HALLYDAY- TRUE COOL (SCOTTI BROS)

Son of FRENCH singer JOHNNY HALLYDAY, this is DAVID's debut L.P. Some of you may be familiar with him from the movie "HE'S MY GIRL" in which he played a struggling Rock singer and sang an excellent track, "ROCK REVIVAL".

That track unfortunately isn't on this album but what you get instead are 9 pieces of Modern AOR produced to a high standard by RICHIE WISE and featuring a host of session musicians including KIM BULLARD (keys), TIM LANDERS (bass) and, yes you guessed it, DAN HUFF (guitar). HALLYDAY himself provides vocals, drums, keyboards, rythm guitar and bass programming so he's actually quite a vitruoso musicin in his own right.

Opening track "MOVE" has already been a big hit all over the Continent and is a quirky keyboard orientated affair in the style of ROBBIE NEVILL, but don't let that put you off as NEVILL was responsible for the excellent "IT'S NOT OVER (TIL IT'S OVER)" which was a huge hit for STARSHIP.

Anyway, prime cuts on this album are without a doubt "HIGH", featuring STAN BUSH on backing vocals and sounding not unlike the great man as well, "TRUE COOL" and the single on side 1 but it's side 2 which will appeal to BOULEVARD readers the most.

"SHADOW SIDE" has keyboards galore set atop a glorious hook and Mr. HUFF's screaming guitars, whereas "LISTENING" is an awesome ballad in the STAN BUSH mould.

The album closes with "MAD MAD WORLD" and the brilliant "WANNA TAKE MY TIME" which opens with a programmed drumbeat and atmospheric keyboards in true MARC JORDAN style. The powerchords of DAN HUFF in the mid section form a circular riff over which he lets fly an amazing solo.

This is one L.P. which I can completely recommend to any fans of High Tech AOR as played by the likes of MARC JORDAN, THE LADDER and maybe even STAN BUSH. Forget the awful WHAT IF, get "TRUE COOL" now.

MJA

DEMO REVIEWS

STALLION- SWEDISH Demo

STALLION are yet another of the continuing Invasion of SCANDINAVIAN AOR groups who deserve to be a household name. They already have one L.P. under their belts, "ON THE RUN" (ALPHA records) from last year, and now they're back with an excellent batch of new material.

"SURPRISE" opens the tape, a keyboard POMP track full of strong Melodic vocals from LASSE JOHANSSON, which help to make it a killer. "BRATPACK CITY" follows and sounds very AMERICAN, Melodic yet sleazy, featuring a stunning solo by RAFAEL MARTINEZ (not a very SWEDISH name) and bombastic drumming from KENNETH AUGUSTSSON.

"MOVIN' ON" has keyboards all over the place, a pounding bassline (supplied by PETER ANDERSSON) and even a guitar/keyboard solo, whilst "NOT PHYSICAL" shows the meatier side of STALLION as the riffs abound and the backing vocals soar.

"SAVE YOUR TEARS" is an excellent ballad with a clever twin guitar solo and LASSE at his best and the demo ends with "MY LIFE", featuring truly haunting keyboards from CHRISTER SUNDELL which will remain with you long after the track has drifted away.

STALLION have come a long way since the "ON THE RUN" L.P., which is quite good in its own right, improving in every department and developing into an individual style. Can't wait for the album.

IVJ

KIZUM- AUSTRALIAN Demo

Hot on the heels of their excellent 9 track demo (as reviewed in issue 2), here is the new 3 song tape from AUSSIE AORsters KIZUM. They've been busy over the past few months gigging a couple of nights a week (as 2 of the 3 members work during the day any more than that would be too tiring) and going through a line-up change, well almost. ADAM CRAIG, an AMERICAN bass player, was drafted in to give vocalist/keyboard player LUKAS OLIVER a bit more freedom (up until then, OLIVER had been playing bass/singing live whilst the band played along to backing tapes and sequenced keyboards) but the whole thing has now fallen through so the line-up remains the same as the one which recorded the last demo.

How on earth did the guys get the time to record? Well, however it was done the product at the end of it is excellent. Featuring 3 choice cuts of Modern AOR, namely "CRY IN THE NIGHT" (my favourite and the most commercial), "FEAR AND FASCINATION" and "ONE BY ONE". Those of you familiar with the band's last demo will recognise the last track as it appeared back then as well, albeit with a completely different arrangement.

Once again the vocals are strong, similar at times to JEFF CANNATA or DAVID HALLYDAY, and the solos are stupendous. Watch out MALMSTEEN et al, JUZZIE's on his way to blow you away!

It's difficult to compare KIZUM with anyone in particular but if forced, I would put them in the same bracket as ARCANGEL, SAGA, DAVID HALLYDAY and THE LADDER. In fact, if they get a deal (which they should) their debut album should be produced by KEITH OLSEN, if that's an indication of what they sound like.

Interest in the band is growing in EUROPE with the last demo receiving much airplay in BELGIUM, even reaching No. 2 in the September Playlist of RADIO OUTREMEUSE so maybe the elusive deal will be signed over here before they get anything in their homeland. That sounds familiar to me, I wonder what DEF LEPPAR -D, T'PAU and even BREATHE would be doing now if they hadn't took the gamble to leave their Mother Country and relocate overseas?

The current demo is available for £3, or \$6 (AUSTRALIAN) from JUSTIN.
CONTACT: JUSTIN BRIGGS, P.O. BOX 38, RIVERWOOD 2210, AUSTRALIA.

MJA

SHEA ROXI- US Demo

SAN FRANCISCO AOR band SHEA ROXI have been around for a few years now and have already opened for the likes of THE TUBES and PAT TRAVERS, two very big names indeed. The band, that's ROB SCHRODER (lead vocals), ADAM MOLINAR (guitars), STEVE NYSTROM (bass), JOE BENNETT (drums) and STEVE SALINAS (keyboards), have really excelled themselves on this, their debut demo tape.

SHEA ROXI (CONT'D)

The songs are good, with everything from NIGHTRANGER to JOURNEY in there. "FISTFULL OF HEAT", the opener, reminds me of TAHNE CAIN'S TRYANGLZ a bit with a touch of NIGHTRANGER thrown in for good measure. ROB SCHRODER is a good singer, OK, maybe he's not the next STEVE PERRY but his vocal work is possitive and quite effective. He shows this to great effect on the JOURNEY-like track "FORTUNE AND FAME".

"ANY WAY TO TREAT" is probably the least effective of the 5 songs on offer but it's still as good as the majority of US demos nowadays, with the exception of FREELANCE and EYES I suppose.

"SOMEBODY LIKE YOU" on the other hand is simply made for US radio with an affectionate keyboard and guitar hook. The JOURNEY influence is there again and I'm sure that this band will appeal to the fans of the worlds greatest band that are reading this.

Last song "ANGEL" is brilliant with a scorching intro that relies heavily on a keyboard melody in true BONJOVI fashion (remember the days of "RUNAWAY"?) and stabbing guitarwork. The mid section is wicked, exploding guitars (aren't they illegal? MJA) and a great solo to boot!

SHEA ROXI are a decent band there's no doubt and probably the next tape will be the one to really look out for. All the signs are there so only time will tell. One thing I did notice was the lack of backing vocals, so next time round I hope the band will put that right.

CONTACT: SHEA ROXI, P.O. BOX 6105, CONCORD, CA 94524. USA.

CL

BAD HABIT- SWEDISH Demo

When I was handed this tape and told to review it I couldn't believe it, so soon after the release of "YOUNG AND INNOCENT", the bands debut vinyl offer -ing (and what a debut!). But hey, I wasn't complaining so of I went, hotfoot, slapped it in the BLASTER and was totally blown away. No, I thought, it can't be that good, so the tape was duly rewound and played once more. Again though, I simply couldn't get to terms with just how good BAD HABIT have become.

The demo is the groups first since they swapped labels (as predicted in ish No. 2) to the VIRGIN label and should form the basis for an excellent album.

Onto the music then. "ROWENA" would, in a perfect world, be No. 1 all over the place, it simply brims over with hooklines and the chorus shows just how good lead singer BAX FEHLING is (METAL FORCES take note). He has a superb range which is the focal point of the group.

"TIL THE END" is ushered in by sweeping majestic keyboards and is a killer ballad. STEVIE ROSE' bass lines interweave with the solid drumming of JAMIE SALZAR and with BAX again singing his socks off you have serious 'trouser explosions' (© IAN JOHNSON) on your hands.

"MYSTERY" has the riff to end all riffs and a magnificent solo from HAL JOHNSTONE, another of SWEDENS ever growing number of axe heroes, whilst next track "DANCIN'" has you doing just that. Toes tappin' and hands a-clappin' (oh no, I just started to rap!) along to some great vocals and guitarwork.

The demo is finished by the bands first single (to be) for VIRGIN, namely a cover version of the all time classic BOSTON track "MORE THAN A FEELING". The guys really excel themselves, a superb version, actually quite similar to the original but featuring a slightly different vocal arrangement, after all BAX may be very good but there's only one BRAD DELP, which I'm sure the band would be the first to agree with. I feel this is more of a tribute to BOSTON than an attempt to cash in on the current trend of cover versions. This theory is compounded by the fact that the band intend to feature a cover of the immortal classic "IN FOR THE COUNT" (by BALANCE) on their forthcoming L.P. I can't wait.

IVJ

ALLIED FORCES- US Demo

For some reason this demo has escaped the attentions of the BRITISH press for almost a year now so I think it's time BOULEVARD changed all that and put you wise to the merits of this exceptional band.

The act was formed about 4½ years ago when the members got together as a kind of Supergroup, pulled from the areas top 5 bands at the time.

CONT'D

ALLIED FORCES (CONT'D)

The addition of JAY FISHER, who joined to replace DANNY VAUGHAN (he left to join WAYSTED), has given the band their own identity and along with EDDIE OJEDA (of TWISTED SISTER fame, apparently he's a big fan of the band) at the production helm, they have produced a 3 track demo which brings to mind all the best bands from the late 70's/early 80's, given a modern production job.

Honestly, I've not been this impressed with a US band since I first heard FREELANCE! From the harmony vocal intro to "ALL OUT OF LOVE" (positively reeks of BOSTON), through the WRABIT like "ON THE RUN" to the barnstorming overblown POMP of "LIFETIME TO SHARE" (memories of the classic SHERIFF album, honestly) the guys have all the bases covered, soaring vocals, pompous riffs, massive vocal harmonies and fluent, melodic solos.

Apparently, the guys have a new demo available now so you can expect a full feature on ALLIED FORCES in the near future. In the meantime why not drop the guys a line. RONNIE WILDE, the band's guitarist, told me recently that he loves receiving letters, especially from overseas, so go on, make his day! Jeez, anyone who cites EUROPE, SURVIVOR, BOSTON and JOURNEY as his fave raves has to be worth writing to!

CONTACT: RONNIE WILDE, 2 WARD LANE, SPRING VALLEY, NEW YORK, NY 10977, USA.

NJA

DIRTY TRYX- UK Demo

A band who have recently caught my attention are BOLTON based DIRTY TRYX. Consisting of 6 young lads, they play good, solid Melodic Rock, although their influences range from METALLICA and ANTHRAX to WHITESNAKE and PAUL SABU.

Recently the band took on a permanent lead vocalist, DAVE LAMBERT, and this has seen them improve dramatically.

Their latest 3 song demo has taken around 10-12 weeks to complete but the wait was worth it.

"LIVIN' FOR ROCK" kicks off the tape and sees the band creeping into TESLA territory, DAVE LAMBERT is a great find for the band as he's a good singer and a charismatic frontman, so that's definitely a plus for the band.

"DIE FOR ME" is a wonderful live song but unfortunately doesn't quite work this time round, a pity really as it's probably my fave track by DIRTY TRYX.

The final cut is "WORK IT OUT". The bulk of the credit on this track must go to keyboardman JONATHAN KAY, who displays some great sounds without ever getting too extravagant. There's a pretty neat solo on this one too.

I've a feeling that we'll be hearing a lot more from this lot in the near future, they've already supported the likes of WOLFSBANE and MARSHALL LAW. Things are looking good for DIRTY TRYX.

CONTACT: DIRTY TRYX, 27 BRIEF STREET, BOLTON, LANCs.



CL

SWEDISH EROTICA- SWEDISH Demo

In issue 2 I ranted and raved about this lot, claiming that they were better than BONFIRE, WHITE LION and TREAT and with their new demo they've improved if that's possible. "LOVE ME OR LEAVE ME" kills almost anything I've heard all year, touching the almighty CONEYHATCH for sheer brilliance, "CAN YOU STAND THE HEAT" is an AOR scorcher similar to their earlier material featuring a strong, punchy chorus as do all SWEDISH EROTICA songs and "TERRI" will surely convince everyone that these guys will be stars. This song is sheer bliss with its quite excellent arrangement and fiery guitarwork, highlighted by superb vocals and fantastic harmonies. It has so many classic moments that I could sit here for ever telling you about it.

I can't help thinking that if this band were AMERICAN they'd be big news already (and they'd have been on the cover of KERRANG! MJA). With the US producing the goods again with FREELANCE, FIRE and EYES the competition is hotting up but my money's on the SCANDINAVIANS with SWEDISH EROTICA, THE BAM BAM BOYS and the truly magnificent VANESSA. One day the world will wake up and see what it's been missing out on all along. Enough said.

STOP PRESS: SWEDISH EROTICA have just signed a deal with VIRGIN. 3 CHEERS!!!

CL

CLASSIC CORNER

RIGGS-1ST (FULL MOON 1982)

RIGGS were a project led by lead singer/guitarist/songwriter JERRY RIGGS. They released their classic debut in '82 and then vanished, which is a shame because the album is full of very strong pop/rock ditties.

JERRY RIGGS was helped out by JEREMY GRAF(guitar/vocals), STEPHEN ROY CARLISLE(drums) and DAVID RIDARICK(bass) whose contributions add to the quality of the tracks without being overly flash.

Speaking of tracks, it's not until the 2nd cut 'ONE NIGHT AFFAIRS' that the album really begins to smoke. Prime time melodic rock with some nice guitarwork and an excellent chorus which shifts the L.P. into a higher gear. 'WRITING ON THE WALL' features a magnificent riff and again a storming chorus which helps to lift the track into an all time great.

Side 2 features the MOTLEY CRUE-like 'DEPENDING ON LOVE'(or should I say a song which CRUE ripped off on the 'SHOUT AT THE DEVIL' L.P.), 'GIRLS ON THE LOOSE' which reminds me of HILLY MICHAELS circa 'CALLING ALL GIRLS' and the brilliant 'CHRISTINE', pop/rock at it's absolute best with the added dimension of JERRY's voice.

Finally though comes the total classic 'TOO STRONG'. Anyone who doesn't rate this song is reading the wrong fanzine! An absolute show-stopper of a track which opens with a slow guitar intro before blasting into one of the greatest AOR choruses ever written. This cut alone justifies the hours you'll spend with your head in a bargain bin searching this L.P. out.

Good luck! You never know what you might discover!

IVJ

COMPETITION

Last issues competition to win a copy of KINGDOM COME'S debut C.D. was won by NICKIE HYDE of BURGESS HILL and JOHN BECKETT of CHESHIRE. The answer was of course, STONE FURY.

This time we are going to be giving away DAVINCI goodies (details are not finalised at time of going to press). If you're interested then just answer the simple question below and send your entry to the address in the Editorial Section.

QUESTION: LEONARDO DA VINCI was a very famous artist. Name the Chapel which he is most renowned for painting.

MARK J. ASHTON

1. VANESSA-SWEDISH Demo
2. DARE-OUT OF THE SILENCE
3. SAHARA-US Demo
4. TIN DRUM-DRUMS OF WAR
5. DAVID HALLYDAY-TRUE COOL

IAN V. JOHNSON

1. DARE-OUT OF THE SILENCE
2. WHITE SISTER-US Demo
3. BAD HABIT-SWEDISH Demo
4. VANESSA-SWEDISH Demo
5. HOUSE OF LORDS-1st

CHRIS LLOYD

1. BAM BAM BOYS-SWEDISH Demo
2. WHITE SISTER-US Demo
3. SWEDISH EROTICA-SWEDISH Demo
4. BAD HABIT-SWEDISH Demo
5. CRAFT-2ND HONEYMOON